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## For Immediate Release

### **RICAPE Launches *Rhode Island FarmWays***

Destination marketing campaign showcases Rhode Island's farms

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Providence, RI (July 10, 2006) - "Want to save a farm? Then visit a farm," says Stu Nunnery, Director of the Rhode Island Center for Agriculture Promotion and Education (RICAPE). As the summer season gets underway, Nunnery is announcing the launching of ***Rhode Island Farm Ways*** – a farm destination marketing campaign designed to showcase Rhode Island's farms and expand agritourism in Rhode Island.

The branded marketing campaign is targeted to consumers and families seeking adventures and activities at some of Rhode Island's most beautiful and historic settings.

The campaign includes a logo (See Header) created by the RDW Group that highlights Rhode Island agriculture's connections to the land, the sea and history, and an easy to use searchable website – [www.rifarmways.org](http://www.rifarmways.org) - that showcases farm and nature site attractions, activities and amenities. The website also provides a seasonal calendar of events and a monthly e-newsletter "The Fence Post" written for consumers.

Nunnery is looking at the big picture: "We're not only marketing farms, we're trying to help grow an industry. The activities and "alternative enterprises" that are conducted on our farms and other sites can provide a significant portion of farm income."

To assist farmers to take advantage of the growing national trend in agritourism, RICAPE conducts an ongoing series of training programs and provides technical assistance and professional services for farmers and nature site operators who want to take advantage of that trend.

Together, agritourism and nature-based tourism are one of the fastest growing segments of tourism nationwide and Nunnery says Rhode Island is poised to step up. "While many of our farms already host visitors in one form or another, there is much work for operators to do on site. We need to build infrastructure in our state and the region to support the growth of what is really an industry inside an industry."

And, he says Rhode Island's farms are worth the effort.

"Rhode Island's farms have assets even beyond the abundant array of locally produced food and greenery that draw people to them. Despite our size, there is an incredible variety of experience for the senses and the soul available on our farms.



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He notes that farms preserve and protect many of the things few of us would want to live without, such as beautiful landscapes and settings, open space and woodlands, waterways and wildlife – all of which are part of the package that you get when you visit one of Rhode Island's farms.

"But they're also very rich in history and have significant cultural and educational value for people of every age and inclination. And in many cases they cannot be beat for spirited recreational activity that has only begun to be tapped," says Nunnery.

Part of RICAPE's work has been to identify for farmers how they can employ more of those natural assets they already have to create new revenue producing activities and programs. "So by visiting a farm, and enjoying and paying for a local product or activity, the public can participate in sustaining and keeping them in business for generations to come."

A special section on the website provides RI FarmWays member farms and nature site attractions with their own web page where they can promote their farms with pictures and information about activities and visitor amenities. Members also have access to support services, materials, resources and links and receive special member rates on future training programs and publications.

In addition to holding workshops on tourism development and hospitality, marketing and business planning, RICAPE has also provided site operators with scholarships, \$11,000 in mini-grants and a special loan program from the RI Economic Development Corporation and First Pioneer Farm Credit.

RICAPE is an independent 501c3 non- profit organization. Rhode Island FarmWays is a special initiative of RICAPE and was started in January of 2005 as the result of a grant from the USDA/NESARE (Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) program in partnership with the DEM Division of Agriculture and the URI College of Environmental and Life Sciences.

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